

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE AUTHORITY  
FIRE AND RESCUE BRANCH**

**VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER  
This is an Unpaid Volunteer Position,  
In Some Instances a Reimbursement Stipend  
May Be Applicable**

Description Created: November 19, 2008  
Revised: April 20, 2010

**PURPOSE AND DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:**

Volunteer Firefighters assist the San Diego County Fire Authority (SDCFA) in firefighting activities and the provision of Emergency Medical Services (EMS). They respond to alarms as members of fire crews to protect life and property using various fire apparatus, equipment, tools, and devices, while ensuring their proper use and maintenance. Teamwork, personal investment, and self-sacrifice are the basis of the social framework of a Volunteer Firefighter. Volunteer Fighters also provide a variety of community services.

Firefighting requires each individual member to perform a variety of duties, be responsible for responding to calls within the community, and sometimes assist other neighboring communities during mutual aid responses. This can range from structural firefighting, wild land firefighting, removing severely injured people from auto accidents, treating people who have been victims of crimes, to delivering babies. Volunteer Firefighters will frequently participate in emergency medical service activity. Volunteer Firefighters are trained as Emergency Medical Technicians. Emergency Medical Technicians administer varying degrees of emergency medical aid to injured people under extreme conditions involving trauma, illness, and personal tragedy. In addition, Volunteer Firefighters may be required to perform other duties as assigned.

**EXAMPLES OF DUTIES:**

**The examples of functions listed in this class specification are representative but not necessarily exhaustive or descriptive of any one position in the class. Management is not precluded from assigning other related functions not listed herein if such functions are a logical assignment for the position. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable an individual with a qualified disability to perform the essential functions of a job, on a case-by-case basis.**

**Essential Functions:**

Volunteer Firefighter: performs firefighting activities and provides Emergency Medical Services (EMS), as well as a variety of community services. Under the supervision of an Officer-In-Charge, these volunteers respond to alarms as members of fire crews to protect life and property using various fire apparatus, equipment, tools, and devices. Duties may include, but are not limited to:

- Carrying and advancing a charged large diameter hose line into a burning building or onto steep terrain for brushfires.
- Entering buildings under adverse fire conditions.
- Making forcible entry into buildings.
- Searching for fire victims and/or removing victims to safety.
- Working in high, open, and confined places.
- Carrying, raising, and extending ladders to assist victims down ladders and away from danger.
- Carrying heavy equipment and power tools up and down ladders or stairs.
- Using a variety of tools to remove walls and ceilings.
- Operating power extrication equipment to assist in patient removal from motor vehicles.
- Carrying patients over rough or uneven terrain for considerable distances.

Driver Operator: meets the qualifications of a Volunteer Firefighter and operates a SDCFA, station, or regional fire engine, ladder truck, rescue vehicle, water tender, or other fire apparatus, in support of firefighting operations and other emergencies. In addition to the Volunteer Firefighter duties above, will include, but are not limited to:

- Operating fire pumps and/or setting up portable tanks and supplying water to fire apparatus.
- Performing hydraulic calculations.
- Operating mobile radios and maintaining equipment as assigned.

Officer-in-Charge: meets the qualifications of a Volunteer Firefighter and a Driver Operator. The Volunteer Firefighter serving as an Officer-in-Charge, in addition to the Volunteer Firefighter duties above, will include, but are not limited to:

- Supervising staff at an SDCFA station, or on regional fire engine, ladder truck, rescue vehicle, water tender, or other apparatus, in support of fire fighting operations and other emergencies, as needed.
- Supervising and directing a firefighting or rescue crew assigned to a fire fighting or rescue vehicle.

### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:**

Each volunteer brings a unique combination of experience, knowledge, skills and abilities to the team. Knowledge, skills and abilities that are particularly applicable to this type of assignment include:

- Must have knowledge of the principles, practices, and procedures of modern firefighting.
- Must have the skills and ability to apply them toward the protection of life and property in multiple fire situations (i.e., structure, vehicle, brush, hazardous materials).
- Must have the skill and ability to use various fire apparatus, equipment, tools, devices, facilities, and maintain them.
- Must have knowledge of computers and computer programs that assist in the accomplishment of assigned tasks.
- Must have the ability to work effectively under the stress of emergency situations and calmly and effectively handle others in emergency situations.
- Must have the ability to hold a charged hose line for long periods of time and shut off a flowing line, while maintaining control of the hose line.
- Must have the knowledge, skill and ability to operate power tools in awkward positions, such as cutting on a sloping roof and cutting from a ladder.
- Must have the ability to drive light duty vehicles and large fire apparatus during various times of the day.
- Must have the ability to read, learn, and remember new and updated detailed complex information, such as hazardous materials information, medical information, or changes in policy or procedures.
- Must have the ability to apply information in a logical manner; maintain composure, confront stressful situations, and withstand the effects of repeated exposure to traumatic situations.
- Must have the ability to engage in moderate to strenuous physical activity.
- Must have the ability to learn and utilize appropriate radio protocol with other fire and emergency medical services personnel.
- Must have the ability to take and follow orders from supervisors.
- Must have the ability to effectively communicate orally (shouting at times) and in writing in English.
- Must have the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with community personnel, other fire agencies, outside agencies, and the general public.
- Must have the knowledge, skill and ability to use computers and computer programs that assist in the accomplishment of assigned tasks and proper documentation of incidents.

## **PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

Volunteer firefighters must possess the physical, mental, and emotional ability to successfully perform the essential and often arduous duties of such an assignment. The physical characteristics described here are representative of those that must be met:

- Frequently stand, walk, sit, kneel, stoop, squat, bend, strain, stretch, contort, pinch, grip, push, pull, twist, reach over and below head and/or shoulders, carry, crawl, climb, walk with weight (for considerable distances), or lift/remove a victim and place on a stretcher.
- Frequently wear a firefighter turnout coat, helmet, self-contained breathing apparatus (backpack and cylinder weighing approximately 44 pounds) and gloves.
- Frequently climb a ladder of at least 35 feet and/or carry a ladder weighing approximately 75 pounds.
- Frequently use your various senses, such as: talking, seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling (identify objects by touch), depth perception and peripheral vision to respond to emergencies within minutes.
- May occasionally be exposed to high noise levels.
- Must be able to walk on uneven ground or walk for long periods of time.
- Must be able to assist victims down ladders; carry fire hose and other heavy equipment up and down ladders, stairs, or hills and steep topography.
- Must be able to hold a flowing hose line for long periods of time and shut off a flowing line while maintaining control of the hose line.
- Must be able to continuously move the neck upward, downward and sideways.

## **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:**

Volunteer Firefighter: in order to be considered for an SDCFA Volunteer Firefighter position an applicant:

1. Must be a high school graduate or have passed the GED Requirements at time of appointment.
2. Be able to read and write English at a level required for successful job performance.
3. Be at least 18 years of age.

Graduates from CSA/Volunteer Firefighter Training Academies and those with certificates of completion of fire service education/training or previous experience as volunteers in firefighting are strongly encouraged to consider applying for this volunteer opportunity. Knowledge of emergency medical rescue methods and equipment and operation of paramedic apparatus is valuable.

Driver Operator: meets the qualifications of a Volunteer Firefighter and:

1. Possesses and maintains a valid Class A or B Commercial California Driver License (CDL), or at minimum, a Firefighter Restricted Class B CDL with endorsements (type of endorsements/restrictions – air brake/tanker); OR,
2. Has completed the SDCFA Volunteer Fire Academy or higher level of training (such as Firefighter I), Hazardous Materials training, SDCFA Driver-Operator 40-hour training, and other courses as required by the SDCFA; and has the required Emergency Medical Service (EMS) certificates.

Officer-in-Charge: meets the qualifications of a Volunteer Firefighter and Driver Operator and:

1. Has completed the SDCFA Officer-In-Charge Task Book and obtained the approval of the Station Chief or zone manager.

All of the various positions require a valid Class C, California Driver's License or higher, appropriate for the vehicle being driven and must be maintained throughout the time volunteer services are provided.

Those applicants interested in volunteer assignments as Driver Operators or Officer-in-Charge must have and maintain, at minimum, a valid restricted Class B Fire Fighter California Driver License. Volunteer Firefighter applicants must already possess, or have the ability to obtain CPR, EMT,

Defibrillation/Combibute cards/certificates, and proof of current personal automobile insurance, prior to beginning any firefighting activities.

### **WORKING CONDITIONS:**

Volunteer Firefighters will be called upon to respond and work in all types of weather and less than ideal conditions. They may be assigned to remote areas. They may work 24-hour shifts, sometimes on weekends and holidays and live in a fire station with others during shifts; Volunteers could be exposed to, and have to enter, hazardous atmospheres and areas and will be expected to work in a safe manner. They must be able to provide emergency medical response and remain calm. They may be exposed to various diseases. They will likely engage in strenuous physical activity during the course of firefighting and other emergency activities. Volunteers may be exposed to physical and emotional hazards associated with firefighting, emergency medical response and rescue.

### **Desirable Traits:**

Communicates effectively, knowledge worker, customer focused, values and respects others, drives to excel, teamwork and collaboration, continuous learning, demonstrates ethical behavior and supportive to change.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

SDCFA Volunteer Firefighters must have a reputation for honesty and trustworthiness. Successful completion of a background investigation conducted by the County of San Diego Department of Human Resources is required. Misdemeanor and/or felony convictions may be disqualifying depending on type, number, severity, and recency. In addition, personal references and employment information will be verified.

New Volunteer Firefighters may be placed on a probationary status, and their Volunteer Fire Chief may limit their responsibilities, increasing duties incrementally, until all necessary training has been completed successfully. Individual experience and performance can also be taken into account prior to assigning volunteers to more complex tasks.

### **Volunteer Firefighter's serve at the pleasure of the Fire Station and SDCFA and may be terminated at any time.**

Appointment to this volunteer assignment will be contingent upon successful completion of a pre-assignment medical examination, which includes drug screening. All candidates must demonstrate the ability to perform the essential functions of a Volunteer Firefighter assignment. The physical characteristics described are representative of those that must be met to successfully perform the essential functions of a volunteer firefighter. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable an individual with a qualified disability to perform the essential functions, on a case-by-case basis.

### **HOW TO APPLY:**

Applications may be obtained at fire stations within the SDCFA. An online form will be available soon on the County of San Diego Department of Planning and Land Use website on the San Diego County Fire Authority's page. Completed applications may be submitted to the Fire Chief at the station to which the applicant is interested in serving, or the Branch Business Manager at CALFIRE Headquarters or the Julian/Cuyamaca Fire Protection District. All required documentation must be submitted with the application.